

GEOGRAPHIC RESPONSE STRATEGIES: PART ONE – INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Scope

These Geographic Response Strategies (GRS) are designed to be a supplement to the Bristol Bay Subarea Contingency Plan for Oil and Hazardous Substances Spills and Releases, commonly referred to as the Bristol Bay Subarea Contingency Plan (SCP). GRS provide unified (public, responders, and agencies) priorities and response strategies for the protection of selected sensitive areas to aid first responders to an oil spill. The GRS list the sensitive resources of an area and the response strategies, equipment, personnel and logistical information necessary to protect the sensitive areas. Because the U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Office, Environmental Protection Agency and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation have already approved them, the GRS serve as pre-approved strategies of the Unified Command during the emergency phase of an oil spill response.

Implementation of these Geographic Response Strategies is the third phase of an oil spill response. The first and primary phase of the response is to contain and remove the oil at the scene of the spill or while it is still on the open water, thereby reducing or eliminating impact on shorelines or sensitive habitats. If some of the spilled oil escapes this tactic, the second phase, which is no less important, is to intercept, contain and remove the oil in the nearshore area. The intent of phase two is the same as phase one: remove the spilled oil before it impacts sensitive environments. If phases one and two are not fully successful, phase three is to protect sensitive areas in the path of the oil. The purpose of phase three is to protect the selected sensitive areas from the impacts of a spill or to minimize that impact to the maximum extent practical.

The sites selected for development of Geographic Response Strategies are not meant to be exclusive; other sensitive sites may require protection during any given oil spill. The fact that a GRS may not have been developed for a certain sensitive site does not mean that site should not be protected if it is threatened by an oil spill.

These strategies are intended to be flexible to allow spill responders to modify them, as necessary, to fit the prevailing conditions at the time of a spill. Seasonal constraints, such as ice or weather, may preclude implementation of some of the strategies in the winter months. It is not intended that all the sites be automatically protected at the beginning of a spill, only those that are in the projected path of the spill. The strategies developed for the selected sites were completed with a focus on minimizing environmental damage, utilizing as small a footprint as needed to support the response operations and selecting sites for equipment deployment that will not cause more damage than the spilled oil. To test these GRS, each site may be visited and equipment deployed according to the strategy, to ensure that the strategy is the most effective in protecting the resources at risk at the site. Revisions will be made to the strategies, and this document, if changes are indicated by site visits, drills or actual use during spills.

The Bristol Bay GRS Workgroup has divided the Subarea into 2 Geographic Response Zones (figure G-1-1) and directed that 32 sites be developed throughout the Subarea. In the future, strategies may be developed for additional sensitive areas.

How to Use These Geographic Response Strategies

The information provided here supplements information provided in the Bristol Bay SCP and the Alaska Federal/State Preparedness Plan for Response to Oil & Hazardous Substances Discharge/Releases (commonly referred to as the Unified Plan). Information provided in either of those plans is not duplicated herein. This document is intended for use by response professionals already familiar with spill response techniques.

The GRS contain basic protection and recovery strategies with directions for implementation in the field. Each description contains the strategy objective, deployment depictions, resource sets required to implement the strategy, and deployment considerations and limitations. These general strategies may be adapted to produce a protection scheme for any site in Bristol Bay. The strategies are taken from the State of Alaska's oil spill response tactics guide, *Spill Tactics for Alaska Responders* (STAR Manual). Responders should use refer to the STAR manual for more detailed information about the GRS tactics. The STAR manual, published by ADEC, is available online at: <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/spar/perp/star/docs.htm>.

Part 2 contains site-specific response strategies. An index at the beginning of each sub-section shows the location of the selected sites. Each GRS consists of two parts: 1) a graphic showing a map, deployment diagram, picture and implementation notes; and 2) a matrix giving the location description, response strategy, response resources, staging area, site access, natural resources being protected and special considerations. .

Figure G-1-1. Bristol Bay Subarea Geographic Response Zones

Who to Contact for Input

Comments and recommendations on these GRS are welcomed. Please send your comments to either of the following agencies:

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Prevention and Emergency Response Program555
Cordova Street Anchorage, AK 99501

United States Coast Guard Captain of the Port, Western Alaska510 L Street Anchorage, AK 99501

How the Document Was Developed

These GRS were developed through a cooperative, workgroup process involving federal, state, and local spill response experts working with representatives from the oil production and transportation industry, citizens' groups, and natural resource agencies. Workgroups were (or will be) formed for each response zone in the subarea.

Workgroup participants identified all sensitive areas with potential to be classified as "Areas of Major Concern" under the criteria established in the Bristol Bay Subarea Plan. These potential sites were evaluated by the additional criteria of 1) risk of being impacted from a water borne spill; and 2) feasibility of successfully protecting the site with existing technology. Using this process, the workgroup selected a preliminary list of sites that was released for public input. Feedback on site selection was solicited from tribal representatives, user groups, environmental organizations and the general public. Based on the feedback received, the workgroup made the final site selections for the zone. Additional sites may be selected in the future.

A Bristol Bay Tactics committee, composed of spill response professionals and personnel from natural resource agencies, was formed to develop draft strategies for each site selected. The draft strategies were reviewed and approved by the entire workgroup and the final draft was forwarded to the Bristol Bay Subarea Committee with the recommendation that it be adopted as part of the Bristol Bay SCP.

The Bristol Bay Workgroup consisted of representatives from the following organizations:

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Alaska Department of Natural Resources
Alaska Chadux Corporation
Alaska Marine Pilots
Bristol Bay Native Association
Bristol Bay Borough
City of Pilot Point
Curyung Tribal Council

City of Dillingham
Lake and Peninsula Borough
Minerals Management Service
National Marine Fisheries Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Park Service
United States Coast Guard
United States Department of the Interior
United States Fish and Wildlife Service

The Workgroup developed Table G-1-1 to aid in the selection of sites from within the Bristol Bay Subarea. The table consists of identified sites in each row with information about resources at each site that could qualify the site as an area of major concern detailed in the columns.